LOK SABHA DEBATES

LOK SABHA

Tuesday, August 20, 1991/Sravana 29, 1913 (Saka)

The Lok Sabha met at Eleven of the Clock

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

OBITUARY REFERENCE

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. Members, I have to inform the House of the sad demise of one of our former colleagues Shri Digvijay Narain Singh.

Shri Digvijay Narain Singh had a long parliamentary career having served this House from First to Sixth Lok Sabha during 1952—79. He represented five different constituencies of the State of Bihar.

An agriculturist and a political worker, Shri Singh was an able and active parliamentarian. He took keen interest in the proceedings of the House particularly relating to foreign affairs and defence.

A widely travelled person, Shri Digvijay Narain Singh was a Member of the Parliamentary Delegations to the USSR and Yugoslavia in 1955 and also a Member of the Indian Delegation to the United Nations Organisation in 1956.

Shri Digvijay Narain Singh passed away at Patna on 2nd August, 1991 at the age of 67 years.

We deeply mourn the loss of this friend and I am sure the House will join me in conveying our condolences to the bereaved family.

The House may now stand in silence for a short while as a mark of respect to the deceased.

(The Members then stood in silence for a short while)

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

[English]

Increase in Air Fares

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*487. SHRI CHETAN P.S. CHAUHAN:
SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether any proposal to increase the air fares has been worked out by the Air India and the Indian Airlines;

(b) if so, the details thereof and since when the revised fares will be applicable; and

(c) the likely impact of the increase on the tourism industry?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI M.O.H. FAROOK): (a) to (c) Air India and Indian Airlines have worked out various options for meeting the impact of the increase in the price of Aviation Turbine Fuel and exchange rate adjustments, one of which is the revision of fares. No decision has so far been taken in this matter.

SHRI CHETAN P.S. CHAUHAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to bring to the notice of the hon. Minister that the Gulf surcharge is still being charged and only 12 out of the 18 A-320s aircraft are in operation as per the Indian Airlines' spokesman's report of 9th August. This loss is being incurred on account of the inefficiency of the Indian Airlines and also to tax the air passengers. It is not fair. Is the Ministry of Civil Aviation approaching the Government to restore the discount of 30 per cent on air fuel which is reduced to 15 per cent now?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA): No, Sir. *(Interruptions)*

SHRI SAIFUDDIN CHOUDHURY: He is bold out, Sir.

SHRI CHETAN P.S. CHAUHAN: Is there any proposal to increase the night flights of the Indian Airlines which are at a reduced fares?

SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA: No, Sir. There is no such proposal at present. But these various permutations and combinations are thought of from time to time. But, at present, there is no such proposal under consideration.

SHRI CHETAN P.S. CHAUHAN: This flight which is running from Bombay to Delhi and from Delhi to Bombay is quite successful. And there is a demand to increase this flight. *(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: You have put two supplementaries.

SHRI RAM NAIK: As a special case, you just allow one more question. Just like an extra ball, let there be an extra question.

MR. SPEAKER: All right.

(Interruptions)

SHRI MURLI DEORA: That was a No Ball. *(Interruptions)*

SHRI CHETAN P.S. CHAUHAN: Now that I have got the chance and the Minister is also agreeing to reply to it, let me put it. Is there any proposal to give special discount to the foreign tourists and to the Non-Resident Indians to secure much needed foreign exchange?

SHRI M.O.H. FAROOK: There is no such proposal. *(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

SHRI RAM NAIK: Had you gone there to play cricket as a result of which all this happened?

SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN: At least I did not quarrel with him.

SHRI ANNA JOSHI: Was it on account of air crash?

SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN: Neither it happened on account of air crash nor was there any quarrel with Scindiaji.

[English]

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE: Were you there at Shri Scindia's place?

SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN: No. *(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: You have to ask the question. You do not reply to the question.

[Translation]

(Interruptions)

SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, through you, I would like to point out that just now the hon. Minister said that a proposal to increase air fares is under consideration. That means the Government is considering air fare hike. At the same time may I know from the hon. Minister whether there is also a proposal to increase passenger amenities and make improvements in the airports. There are many such airports which are not equipped with I.L.S facilities for the landing of aircraft and the accident that took place recently is a burning example of this lapse. I.L.S. facility is not available in Indore airport too. The said airport does not have the conveyor belt facilities even. Is there any proposal to improve the quality of food being served to the passengers in aeroplane? Is the hon. Minister proposing to give additional facilities while he has a proposal to escalate the airfare?

[English]

SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA: The question is not really about the conveyor belt. These are not really about the facilities at the airport.

I just like to make one clarification in reply to hon. Member Shri Chetan Chauhan. There are certain discounted air fares which are already available like the 'Discover India Fare'. There is another scheme also where foreign tourists who pay in dollars do get certain discount. But that is already existing. There is no new proposal.

MR. SPEAKER: The Minister feels that this does not arise out of the main question. So, he needs a notice.

SHRI ANNA JOSHI: What will be the additional burden due to increase in price of aviation turbine fuel and the exchange rate adjustment? And the second part of the question is, is it fact that you have not increased the rates only because a

judicial case is going on against you in the Ahmedabad Court from the side of Ahmedabad Consumer's Society?

SHRI M.O.H. FAROOK: The impact of ATF price increase is Rs. 100 crores. It is true that there is a case in Ahmedabad Court.

MR. SPEAKER: But you have not increased the fare only because of that.

SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA: No, Sir.

MR. SPEAKER: I think, you have answered the question.

SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA: First of all the increase in the price of aviation turbine fuel has put an additional estimated burden of approximately Rs. 103 crores.

The depreciated rupee would put an additional burden of about Rs. 85 crores approximately. These are all estimates and some more extra charges on navigation, night landing facilities are going to cost us about Rs. 15 crores. As far as additional burden is concerned it will be over Rs. 200 crores. As far as the case in the Ahmedabad High Court is concerned, there is a case, but whenever fare increases have taken place in the recent past and if fare increases takes place in future, permission of High Court is solicited.

SHRI ANNA JOSHI: Is it delayed because of the case in the High Court?

MR. SPEAKER: He has correctly answered that question.

SHRI MANORANJAN BHAKTA: I would like to know from the hon. Minister, whether it is a fact that in the North-Eastern regions and in Tripura, there is a subsidy amounting to 17½ per cent on the passenger fare and, if so, what is the criteria? I would like to know whether the Government is going to consider to make applicable the same type of subsidy to the passengers, who are travelling from Calcutta and Madras to Port Blair, Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA: There are certain subsidised fares to those parts of the country, mainly on the criteria that they are completely cut off from all other communications. I suppose, Port Blair would probably come under that and it is something which we would certainly consider.

[Translation]

PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT: Sir, through you I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether along with the proposal to increase the air fares in Indian Airlines and Air India there is also a proposal to provide adequate security to passengers and contain incidents of aircrash. The Minister is requested kindly to throw light on it.

MR. SPEAKER: It is not related to this question.

[English]

DR. B.G. JAWALI: The total net revenue is worth Rs. 103 crores approximately. Now, there are two aspects in the collection of revenue—like the Ministers, Members of Parliament, top bureaucrats and businessmen who get reimbursement. What is the actual revenue collected from the people as such, excluding the so-called book adjustment?

SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA: The total revenue, the Indian Airlines has collected in 1990-91 is about Rs. 1100 crores. Earlier, it was Rs. 1125 crores. In the current financial year it was estimated at Rs. 1435 crores.

-SHRI RAM NAIK: The Minister has said that at present, there is no proposal to increase the fare immediately. While in Railways, you have increased it, because of the cost of production, fuel increase—20 per cent, 25 per cent in case of suburban commuters, I am surprised to know, why there is so much delay in not increasing the fare, whereas everywhere else the common man is being hit, whilest the Airline's passengers are only being spared. Is there any special consideration for which it is not being increased?

SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA: I have not said that there is no proposal to increase fares; I had said that this is one of the various options that is under examination. But, I am very glad to hear that if I do take this decision in future, we will have the full support of Shri Ram Naik and his senior colleagues.